NOTES FROM THE VOID

The A Void Collective Fanzine
Issue 6, Jan/Feb 2026
FREE

Keeping Up With The Joneses

The Keepers' Jordan Jones speaks out

INSIDE:
The Good Fridays
Joe Bombast
Billy Crawford
Joy Disposal Unit
72%
Peace Frog

Live Music Inclusivity
A Beginners Guide to the local scene
Guilty Pleasures
Why Workbridge mattered
plus live and record reviews

OUR MANIFESTO

No one should be excluded from performing their music in public because of their neurotype, disability, age, or inexperience. A band playing their first gig is as valuable as someone playing their thousandth, and the age of a performer has no bearing on how good they are or whether they should be given good gigs.
Some neurotypes and mental health conditions make it harder for musicians to find opportunities and make networking an impossible task, which means the gigs don't come. We aim to remove that barrier.
We understand that some music is deemed too 'weird' to be given good gigs: that's wrong, they shouldn't be relegated to the outer edges of open mic nights - they should be on the bills at proper gigs, with their name on the poster.

We are a group of musicians from various bands, and we aim for full inclusivity, to give valuable shows to the people who are ignored by some of the gatekeepers. We stand against ageism, ableism, exclusion of any kind, and favouritism. We stand for the overlooked and marginalised.
We make each gig valuable to the acts performing, with long-lasting impact. We have an etiquette guide that makes the shows stress-free, and once the gig has ended, we do things for the acts who have performed, whether it's recording them cheaply (or even free), helping with instrument repairs, or enabling them to go and do what we do elsewhere.

There was a void, and we filled it.

Read the long version at https://linktr.ee/avoidcollective

Editor's Note

Brain farts from Alex Botten

For a little while, it all looked so good, didn't it? The Internet gave us so many options, so many ways to take control of our lives. For bands, it was a miracle; suddenly, we could reach music lovers all over the world, without having to deal with a record label at all! Gone were the days of sending demo tapes, then CDRs, to labels in the hope that they'd send their A&R guy to see you at your next show. No longer did we have to face such overwhelming apathy that we might as well have put the demo containing jiffy bags into the bin next to the postbox! As Momus said (paraphrasing and reframing Warhol), everyone now had the chance to be world famous to 15 people. The means of production had been seized, and all that remained was for the major labels and big corporations to die or recalibrate to this new world where we held the power. This was true of music, of software... even dating had become something we controlled.

And the big corporations and labels did recalibrate, but not in the way we'd hoped. They stealthily made alliances with the new distributors of music, and bought out the scrappy software developers. Before we knew it Spotify existed, but that was ok, cos it made getting our music to the whole world a lot easier! So we all signed up, happily uploading our creative endeavours to Daniel Ek's seemingly benign distribution platform.

But we had all of us been deceived, for another plan had been forged in the fires deep in the twisted money-obsessed souls of the corporations. Before we realised what we'd done, we'd allowed a new, more malevolent beast to take over from the old system, a beast into which the corporations had poured their cruelty, malice, and will to dominate all life.

Now the labels didn't even have to pay the bands to make money off their fans!

Spotify came up with a system where any song with plays under 1000 made no money at all. But where did the subscriptions from the fans of those bands go? Straight to the major labels! For every cent Take Me To The Doctor didn't make, Coldplay made two. Then Spotify introduced AI artists, flooding playlists with non-existent bands so they didn't have to pay out at all.

The recent documentary series, Girlbands Forever, highlighted just how appallingly treated members of 90's girl bands were, but rather than look at this and say 'never again', the music industry has simply expanded the cruelty. Now even the tiniest artist is expected to jump through hoops if they want any support from anyone of note. What was once forced upon the already famous, and in some cases financially rewarded, is now forced on everyone for no money at all.

It's fucked.

So step away from it, refuse to play the game, stop making content for TikTok in the hope it'll go viral (seeing bands doing a dance 'every day until we go viral' is both saddening and cringe-inducing). Stop posting those 'POV: You've just found your new favourite punkpop band' stories on Instagram (I block every single band that does, regardless of whether I might like them or not). Stop playing the game. Say 'no more'.

We can still take all this back, but we have to think local, to accept that global fame is never going to come knocking on the door of a band from Kingsthorpe - those days are gone. What we can do is build a thriving, rewarding, local scene, one with its own micro-labels, music press, festivals, radio shows, etc. So let's do it.

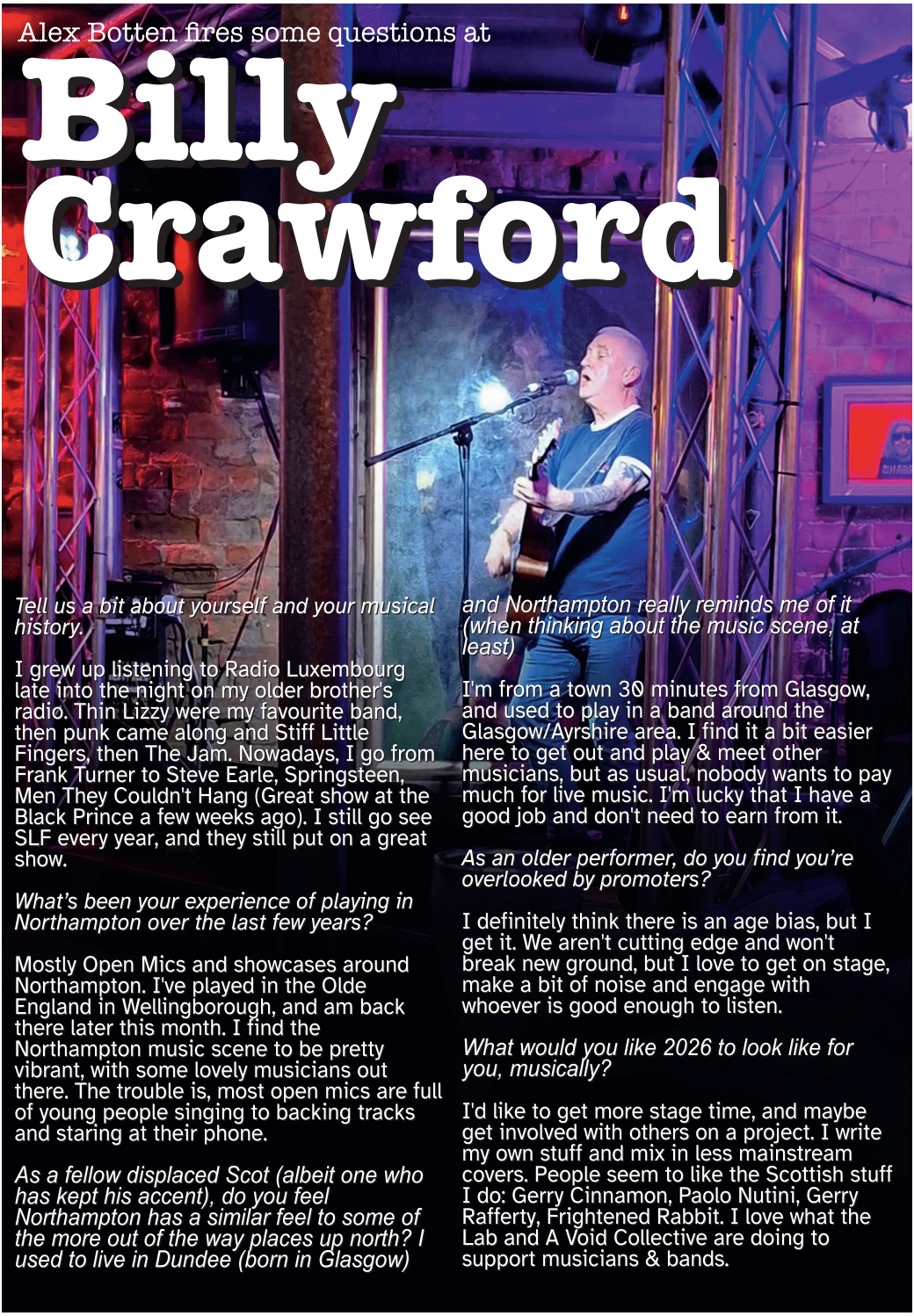
Why **Workbridge** Matters

Cheryl Botten-Smith explains

You may have noticed a lot of bad press around St Andrews Healthcare of late. As someone who proudly worked there for 25 plus years it's very hard to read about the bad practice and sad demise of the place, but most upsetting of all is reading about the closure of Workbridge. This service has been in place for over 40 years, offering highly valued vocational and educational opportunities to local service users with autism, learning disabilities and mental health needs. The service is outstanding and has a hugely positive impact on those who access and rely on it. There are service users who have been attending Workbridge for almost all of the years it's been open, and for whom it is an intrinsic part of their daily life, social network and routine, and to see that closing down is frankly heart-breaking. Having met and worked with those service users and seen first hand how much they gained from attending the service and how much it means to them, it genuinely breaks my heart. They have a real community in Workbridge, which is based on creating a safe and stimulating place with carefully planned activities to give people opportunities to develop a range of life and work skills. It is also a place to socialise with a like minded peer group and build their confidence and sense of value in society. I know that there are people who work there that are so committed and passionate about the place and the service users that they are looking at how they can possibly find a way to continue the service without St Andrews backing. I sincerely hope that something comes of this and that Workbridge gets to continue in a new form and a new place, but that it retains the same heart and comittment to the service users. It truly is a place with a big heart that changes lives, and for it to just be let go of would be beyond tragic.

Alex Botten fires some questions at

Billy Crawford



Tell us a bit about yourself and your musical history.

I grew up listening to Radio Luxembourg late into the night on my older brother's radio. Thin Lizzy were my favourite band, then punk came along and Stiff Little Fingers, then The Jam. Nowadays, I go from Frank Turner to Steve Earle, Springsteen, Men They Couldn't Hang (Great show at the Black Prince a few weeks ago). I still go see SLF every year, and they still put on a great show.

What's been your experience of playing in Northampton over the last few years?

Mostly Open Mics and showcases around Northampton. I've played in the Olde England in Wellingborough, and am back there later this month. I find the Northampton music scene to be pretty vibrant, with some lovely musicians out there. The trouble is, most open mics are full of young people singing to backing tracks and staring at their phone.

As a fellow displaced Scot (albeit one who has kept his accent), do you feel Northampton has a similar feel to some of the more out of the way places up north? I used to live in Dundee (born in Glasgow) and Northampton really reminds me of it (when thinking about the music scene, at least)

I'm from a town 30 minutes from Glasgow, and used to play in a band around the Glasgow/Ayrshire area. I find it a bit easier here to get out and play & meet other musicians, but as usual, nobody wants to pay much for live music. I'm lucky that I have a good job and don't need to earn from it.

As an older performer, do you find you're overlooked by promoters?

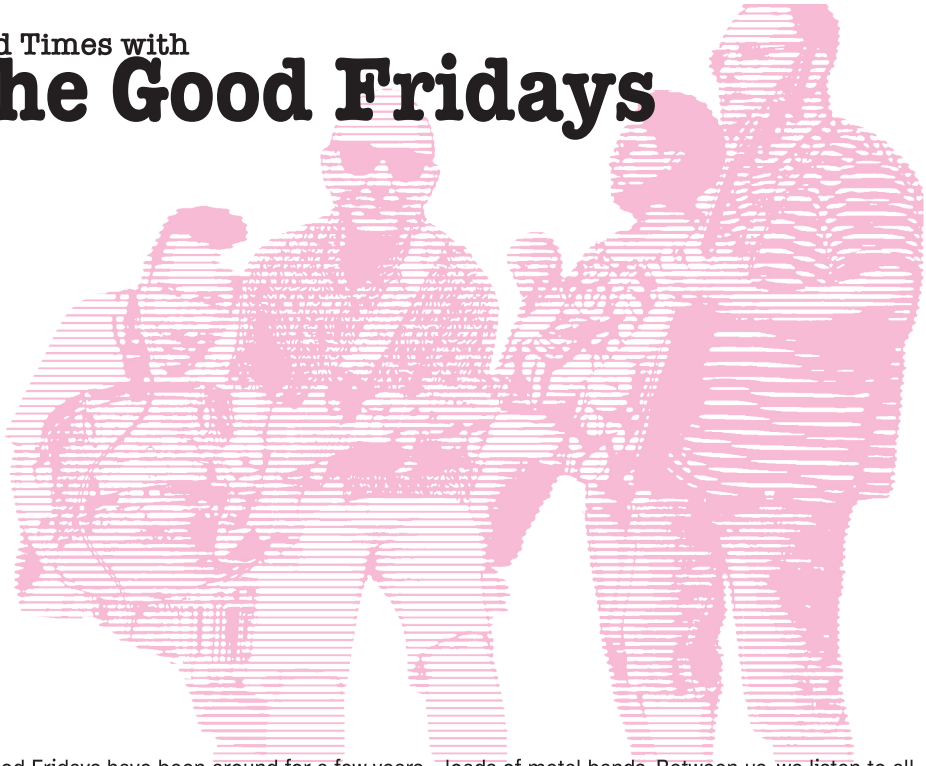
I definitely think there is an age bias, but I get it. We aren't cutting edge and won't break new ground, but I love to get on stage, make a bit of noise and engage with whoever is good enough to listen.

What would you like 2026 to look like for you, musically?

I'd like to get more stage time, and maybe get involved with others on a project. I write my own stuff and mix in less mainstream covers. People seem to like the Scottish stuff I do: Gerry Cinnamon, Paolo Nutini, Gerry Rafferty, Frightened Rabbit. I love what the Lab and A Void Collective are doing to support musicians & bands.

Good Times with

The Good Fridays



The Good Fridays have been around for a few years now. We asked them a few questions ahead of their A Void appearance in February. We began by asking about their origin story.
“Our lead singer Caz has been writing songs for years, but was feeling unfulfilled playing in a covers band. He got in touch with his old bass-playing friend Dave in 2021 to see if he wanted to start a new project. Dave roped in drummer Andy - they'd previously played together in power trio Orwell Music. Caz found vocalist Mickey and guitarist Riccardo online. Along the way we've had other members for varying amounts of time - from a single rehearsal to a few months - but we seem to have settled now...”

You’re a far more upbeat outfit than a lot of local acts, is this a conscious thing?
“We've never really thought of it like that. The idea is to play some memorable songs with elements of both alternative and classic rock. Hopefully we do a reasonable job of that!”

Who has influenced you as musicians?
“From the alternative side of things: Happy Mondays, Stone Roses, The Smiths. From the classic rock canon: Thin Lizzy, Led Zeppelin and loads of metal bands. Between us, we listen to all sorts of stuff.”

If you could be in any other local band, who would you pick?
“Dave doesn't need to answer this because he's in Skybeard - playing music in a very different style. We've done loads of gigs with Marabar Caves and they're a great bunch, so probably them!”

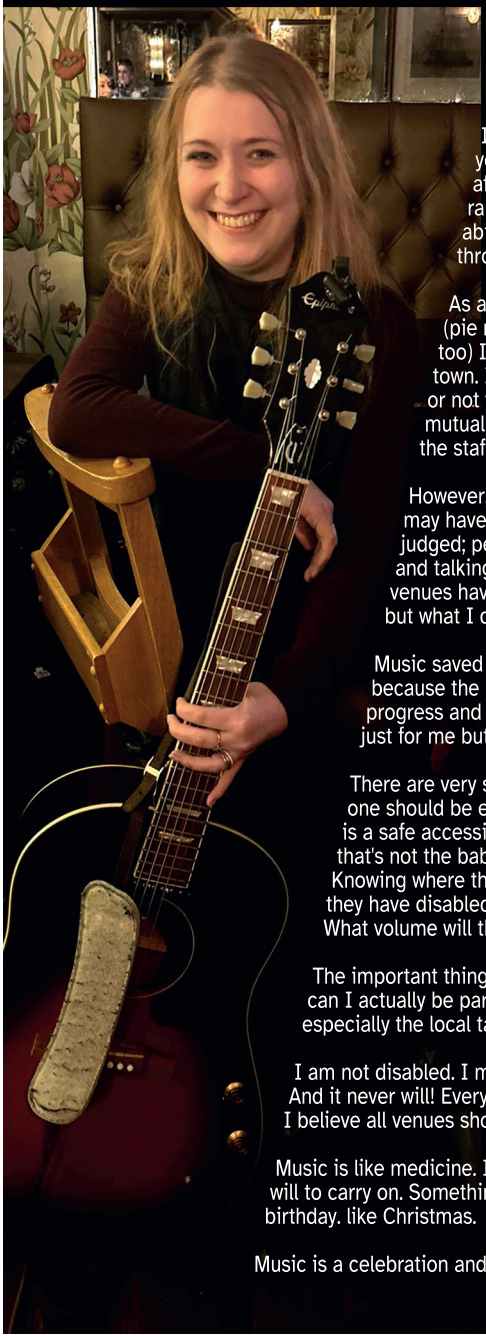
What have been your career highs and lows to date?
“We always finish our set with the song The Man From Del Monte, which has a sweary refrain that we get the audience to join in with. At one gig at the Lamplighter, the crowd did so very enthusiastically. The place went nuts! It was awesome.
Riccardo says the hilarious low point was when we played at the Shire Horse in Kettering recently - but he turned up at the pub of the same name in Corby. He'd unloaded all of his equipment before he realised his error.”

Finally, what’s next for The Good Fridays?
“More gigs, more recording. See you around town!”

https://www.instagram.com/the.good.fridays/

Music is Medicine

Aimee Woollon-Kemp on live music and accessibility



Have you heard of Guillain-Barré syndrome? No? Neither had I.
Have you heard of the Miller Fisher variant? No? Neither had I.

I was diagnosed with this rare condition in June 2025 after years of being misdiagnosed. I have damaged nerves which affects my ability to walk and my ability to write. Due to my rare variant my optic nerves are also damaged. It affects my ability to walk to the extent I was in a wheelchair. What got me through? Music

As a new resident to Northampton after moving from London (pie mash and liquor I will recommend, chilli vinegar and pepper too) I have been absolutely blown away by the sheer talent in this town. It's so inclusive, no matter how long you've played, whether or not you play your own music, you're at home. It's a place of mutual respect and inclusiveness and community from the artists, the staff and the wonderful audiences.

However, one difficulty is accessibility for people who are less able. I may have Guillain-Barré syndrome but it doesn't have me! I am often judged; people assuming I am drunk, people talking as if I'm stupid and talking down to me. This happened to the extent that some venues have, without asking, thrown me out. I know mistakes happen but what I don't get is ignorance and lack of any attempt to understand.

Music saved me. It got me out of a dark place I was in (no it wasn't because the light bulbs went off). It was my therapy, my reason to progress and to not give up on myself. And that should be the case not just for me but for everyone!

There are very simple things that can change a person's experience, and no one should be excluded. Knowing that you will not be judged. Knowing there is a safe accessible place to sit (personally high chairs are my nemesis - that's not the baby kind! I'm short so it's a struggle at the best of times). Knowing where the bathroom is. It's a simple thing but are there stairs? Do they have disabled access at the venue? Are there going to be flashing lights? What volume will the noise be?

The important thing, am I safe and comfortable? And even more importantly, can I actually be part of a community that loves and appreciates music and especially the local talent we have?

I am not disabled. I may have difficulties day to day but that does not define me. And it never will! Everyone has a right to come to showcases, open mics, solo gigs. I believe all venues should cater to everyone and anyone.

Music is like medicine. It may not fix everything but it heals the soul and gives you a will to carry on. Something to look forward to like your favourite TV show, like your birthday. like Christmas.

Music is a celebration and no one should be deprived of the sheer joy that it brings.

Greyfriars

I hate what they did to you

You were ahead of your time
Built for a dystopia that was yet to arrive
Dark brick and mouth agape
A cold and leaking terminus
The time is now and all that remains are hoardings, weeds and the descendants of rats that once swarmed around your heavy feet

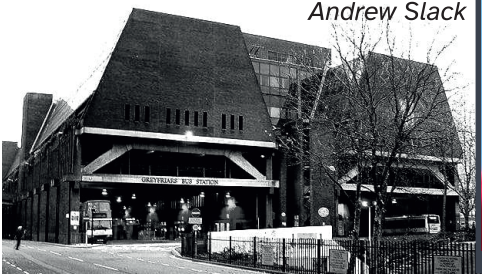
A curse on Kevin McCloud!
The near-bald bastard of Bedfordshire
Predominantly an interior designer
His scant regard for ugly beauty
and soundbite-grabbing dismissal
sealed your fate

Did Express Lifts shudder
when your sentence was passed?
Did the ghost of the castle mutter
when the date was set at last?

A smothered roar and you were gone
In the days that followed
I'm sure the fallout landed
on our hands and on our faces
And ever since a lingering regret
and a gnawing feeling of absence
has seeped into our bones

To destroy what we build seems natural;
The boot in the sandcastle, the knife in the canvas, a rift in the family...
But sometimes we go too far

Andrew Slack



STRANGE DAYS

We try to make sense of **Jack Parker**'s movie debut **Peace Frog**

Jack Parker's cinematic debut is difficult to describe, but we'll give it a go.

A be-mulletted moustache wearing self-described hippy gets kicked out of band that he wasn't apparently in, goes to see a fortune teller, and meets a magic frog. The two then encounter an increasingly ludicrous cavalcade of tattoo-faced hipster wazocks the likes of which you'd cross the road to avoid in real life. Lots of drugs are taken (one suspects in a non-simulated manner), aspect ratios switch seemingly at random, songs begin and suddenly stop (often halfway through), while the lead character continues his wide eyed faux-Noel Fielding quest to understand life through the medium of licking the back of a toy amphibian.

Along the way he goes to a Venus Fly Trap gig at the Black Prince, so that's something.

If this sounds like it makes almost no sense then you've got the gist of "Peace Frog" perfectly. It's either the worst thing ever made or total genius and to be honest we're not sure which. You'll just have to watch it to make your own mind up.

Watch at https://youtu.be/JwB6iZK6ZNE

With fewer gigs played in the last 3 years than some local acts manage in a month, **72%** are now back, so we ask

Where the HELL have you been!?

Drummer Joel Harries has the facts "Rewinding a fair way to the beginning of 2020 we had just finished a fun weekender of gigs and I was preparing to move to Manchester. We had plans to get together monthly to work on new music and to do more gigs to support our recent album. Obviously a large spanner appeared in the works and we didn't manage much of that at all! We did release a split 7" single and reissue our 2019 album on vinyl during that period which was great but gigs and rehearsals remained sporadic. The difficulty of living in different towns continued to effect what we were able to accomplish. We were averaging 2/3 gigs a year through 2022-2025 but we finished writing an album and recorded it towards the end of 2024. Various fun plans and additional circumstances meant that it took a while to schedule the release but now here we are! First single out now, second out in Jan and the full album in February 2026! More plans are afoot so hoping for a much busier time as we head into our 19th year as a band! Cheers!"

https://72percent.bandcamp.com/music

GUILTY PLEASURES?

Alex Botten admits the truth

Lou Barlow, brazenly not playing "Barbie Girl"

We all have 'guilty pleasure' songs, but there are some that are deemed so beyond what is acceptable that we can never admit to liking them.

I have a few that I can barely admit to myself that I enjoy, and I'm going to post them here. There's something important to consider though: I honestly believe all these would be held up as masterful if Lou Barlow (of Sebadoh, Dinosaur Jr etc) had done them. When you listen try to imagine Lou singing them.

"White Flag" by Dido. Properly heartbreaking when you listen properly - you've just avoided doing so cos Lou Barlow didn't sing it.

"1973" by James Blunt. A genius look at the melancholy of getting older, with a properly good tune, only you can't bring yourself to admit it due to Jason Lowenstein not playing bass on it.

"The One I Love" by David Gray. An utterly devastating cry from a dying soldier on a battlefield, that you refuse to like because it's not on 'Weed Forestin'"

"Run" by Snow Patrol. Ok, so this one doesn't really count, as it already sounds like Sebadoh due to Gary Lightbody's obsession with Lou and pals. Fun fact for non-Dundee folk, Snow Patrol were nicknamed 'Snobadoh' in their early years on the Dundee scene.

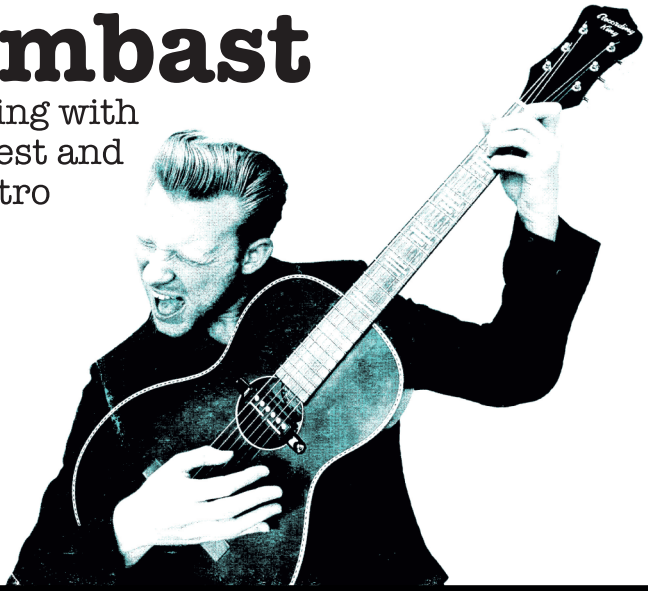
"Turn Back Time" by Aqua. A weirdly Bond-theme-esque intro leads into a track that you would have deemed 'ok for a b-side' if Folk Implosion had released it.

"Brand New Love" by Sebadoh. Would have been a global number one if fucking Chris Martin had sung it.

What are yours?

Joe Bombast

Rocking and Rolling with Northampton's Best and Only One Man Retro Rock Outfit



For anyone who doesn't know who you are, what is your potted history?

I came into the Northampton music scene in my mid to late twenties - I formed a band called The Mobbs, a group heavily inspired by garage punk rock. All of us had come from ambitious young bands trying to "make it" in the guitar-driven indie pop world of the late 2000s. The Mobbs was meant to be a reaction against that whole indie-boy scene — a chance to break away and play the wild, chaotic music we actually wanted to make. It worked. We ended up playing across Europe and spent a good amount of time rubbing shoulders with the garage rock crowd in London.
When The Mobbs called it a day in 2018, Cheadle (our drummer) and I launched GoGo Loco. In my head, it was always meant to be a high-octane, Bo Diddley–inspired rhythm and blues outfit... and in many ways, it still is.
More recently, I've been recording and performing solo as Joe Bombast, a one-man band project. I've just written the following bio for it...
"Joe Bombast an unsophisticated mentee of the infamous Hasil Adkins—think Eddie Cochran with a head injury. It's raw, ragged rock 'n' roll, delivered with gleeful, unwieldy silliness, created purely to entertain you and to fuel his own ego."

How have you found playing around Northampton in the last 18 months? Has anything changed?

I've barely played in Northampton in the last 18 months. GoGo Loco have played three support slots in that time at The Black Prince. One of those gigs was great with CaveGirl & The Neandergals simply because we were playing to an audience who understood and appreciated our style of music. Other than that, it's been pretty mediocre.
Venues are struggling even more than they used to with booking bands; be that due to limited funds to pay bands or a complete non-interest in live music. Bars and venues want covers, originals bands need to be something special or have a big local following. Young people don't seem to go out to gigs anymore, so the whole local musical landscape has changed a lot recently.

Do you think it's getting harder to get gigs?

It's extremely difficult to get gigs everywhere. A friend of mine sent me a list of approximately 40 gig venues to contact across the UK of which only two ever responded. I've somehow managed to book myself a small tour this December but I had to start booking that about six months ago...not to mention how relentlessly persistent I had to be to get anyone to respond at all!

Are GoGo Loco still in business, or...?

GoGo Loco are in a confused limbo at the moment. We have an LP to release...but no gigs so we're trying to get that engine started again. We have started playing with a bass player to shake things up a bit!

What has been your high point of the last couple of years? And what's been something that you'd rather forget?

High point probably was the CaveGirl & The Neandergals gig at the Prince back in May. Releasing my Joe Bombast LP and singles has been a lot of fun and most definitely a high point even if just for my own amusement! Low point was my amp breaking down at a gig we did that just sent the whole show into a tis-was of confusion and dreadful sound!

What's next for you in 2026?

I've got a couple of shows booked for Joe Bombast, one being Bedlam Breakout in March.
I'm hoping to crack on and get the GoGo Loco LP out on my self-financed label "Martone Records" in the Spring also!
Joe will play the February A Void event

Excerpts from 25 Years of Apathy: The Life and Times of

JOY DISPOSAL Unit

Andrew Slack recounts the origins of the local legends

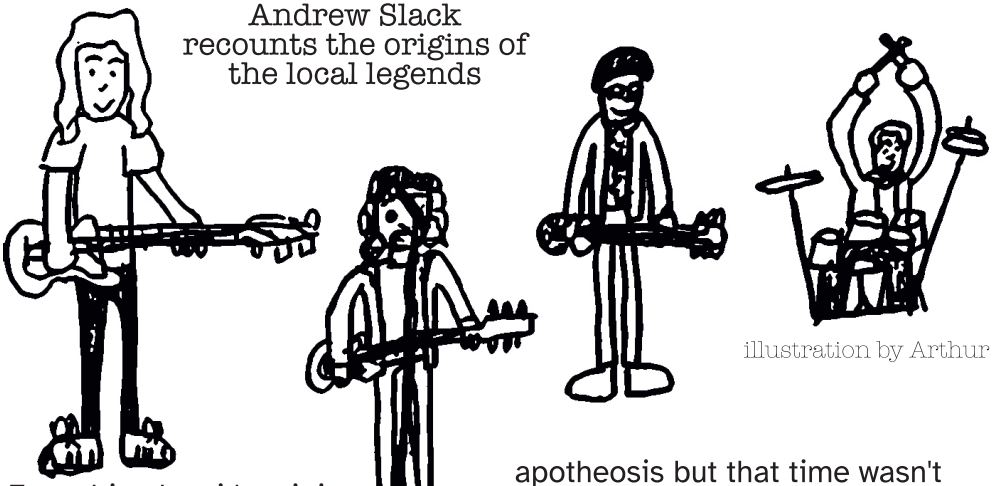


illustration by Arthur

Everything has it's origin. The great, the mediocre and the terrible. Time will tell where we stand but as beginnings go, Bishop Auckland was not a good start. An on-it's-arse market town in County Durham, Bishop was a place you were born into and then escaped from. We were working class but we didn't want to work so moving to university and starting a band was a logical step. This too, became work so we kicked the can down the road, plastered ourselves in makeup and talked about music for hours. The blandness of the times paralysed us. It was the early 2000s and instead of being spurred into action by the likes of Travis and Coldplay we did mostly nothing, content to scribble obscenities on posters of Fran Healy, spray paint guitars and rant about the shite state of things while the indie landfill expanded. We didn't want to be a part of this. We weren't ready. At some point there would be a kind of musical apotheosis but that time wasn't now. This never happened, of course. We eventually appeared as Coma Valley Slumber, a straight-to-video band name inspired by genre neither of us were particularly interested in. The name didn't stick and the Durham accent made it sound like we were called Korma Valley Slumber. The idea of being the mild curry of indie rock filled us with dread so we returned to the drawing board. During this period we were enrolled on the New Deal for Musicians programme, a Labour government initiative designed to help aspiring bands and artists. We could've used this, like the Zutons, to make something of ourselves but we were once again happy to engage in acts of self sabotage, refusing to take part in open-mic showcases and writing horrible feedback about the other performers. The programme ended and all we had to show were a couple of Marshall combo amps, bought by the Job Centre, and a renewed hatred of acoustic guitars.

Wig and Pen, 2008. Probably

A revolving door of bass players and drummers (Bod, Joe, Fergus, Rex, Simmo and Jon) came and went, all uniquely shit in their own way. Simon and I were no better; we had hit upon the magical idea of getting our friends to play but didn't know how to teach them. Somehow during this, and despite our best efforts, gigs happened. The Racehorse, the Wig and Pen, The Punch and Judy, the King Billy - addled spectacles of incompetent musicianship, technical ignorance and unintentional slapstick comedy. Performed by different line-ups under different names: Black Shivers, the Sodden, the Vybe, Faff Galleon, Bum Carnival... "Memories may last for years but names are just for souvenirs" as Mr Eldritch once said. 2017 rolled around and we disappeared again.

These were the wilderness years, the years of doing nothing but practice. We became the Mrs Haversham of indie rock, jilted but undefeated. In a cocoon of doubt and indecision, we kept going, oblivious to the outside world. We had shortened the name to Shivers and would later discover Ed Sheeren wrote a song about us in 2021, completely missing the point.

"Lipstick on my guitar (ooh), fill up the engine, we can drive real far". That's not us. We had to change the name again.

After six summers with the length of six long winters we emerged, somewhat less beautiful. The metamorphosis had gone wrong but we were slightly better musicians and the songs had improved. We replaced our crumbling equipment and started planning a comeback. Drunk at

Racecourse Pavillion, 2023. Out of retirement

the bar of the Charles Bradlaugh and watching Venus Fly Trap, we changed the name again. Joy Disposal Unit was born, Kuato-like, a 25 year-overdue-parasitic baby, minus the psychic powers. Open your mind Northampton and let us in.

To be continued...

"The Joke is We Can Never Keep Our Members"

Shoetown's answer to Mark E. Smith explains life in **The Keepers**

"The joke is the band is called the Keepers, but I can't keep members!" said Jordan Jones in the first of the short-lived A Void Podcast, nearly a year ago. At the end of a year that's seen the band reclaim their place in the local scene, Alex Botten sat down for a chat with their frontman.

Firstly, what's the current state of play with The Keepers?
"I'm back on guitar now almost permanently, we're playing a lot more of the older songs, we're reworking a lot of the newer songs and working out the next 'sound'. The lineup is myself on lead vocals and guitar, Alex Everitt on lead guitar, Steve Raison playing bass and Harry Newey on drums. We're busy recording 3 albums at once while writing some new songs and have a few gigs here and there."

So, THE question: You've been the sole constant member of The Keepers over the years, making you Northampton's Mark E Smith (or Robert Smith, given hair similarities!), why do people keep leaving your band?
"Brilliant! Actually, even I left last year, but was persuaded to come back! That's quite a big question though, but I'd say it's a cross between musical differences, personality differences and a different approach to being in a band."

That's a small answer to a big question! You know I have to delve further! Are you secretly a bit of a tyrant? Or do you have a singular vision that some people either don't get or can't help with?
"Some people would call me that. Others probably not. When I was younger, I was incredibly driven. You know what it's like - you've written a song and know how it needs to sound, but some people in the past have just been in the band to pass the time. Back in 2019, it was incredibly collaborative with people who all liked mostly the same music. It's incredibly collaborative now since Alex Everitt joined, probably because we have very similar tastes in music, and he can hear what I'm trying to achieve. Our last guitarist, I can't think of one band we both liked, perhaps The Smiths? He didn't even like The Beatles! I think a lot of previous members have had an issue with status and how we're seen, more of them would be happy in a trendy Camden bar, dressing like they still have Pete Doherty's lighter!"

How do you think the band is seen?
"I think we're not seen, which is more of the issue! Probably, people see us as remarkably untrendy. I don't think people get us really. As we're a bit more than just

another band trying to sound like the early 2000s and use more than 2 brain cells in the studio, it doesn't resonate with people, at least not in Northampton. We're probably seen as a bunch of arty farty types. I think we're quite underrated... Maybe people think we're a bit past it? We were popular a good few years ago, times change!" he pauses, before going on, "Also, another thing I'd like to add to this thought. There's a lot of politics locally with bands, and it's all a bit of a clique to me. I'm more worried about making music that at least means something to me. I'm really not that bothered about how people see us or don't see us. There's a lot of ego about. Everyone likes you until you start doing well, then it all becomes snidey and jealousy. It's all about the songs to me, not the attitude and rubbish that goes with it. I've got far too much to do than play politics locally. It's all just very fake to me."

You've mentioned that you're making three albums. What made you decide to record three at once? Are they significantly different from each other?
"Sheer madness, really. There's been so much stuff hanging around from the last 5 or 6 years that either the last lineup didn't want to play or couldn't play. I just thought "if I don't get these out now, they'll never get out" Luckily, this lineup likes the songs I've got and what's to come. I mentioned it before, but Alex coming in has been a godsend; he's scared the band, not only does he 'get it', he's also an incredible songwriter, and I'm genuinely excited to be working on his songs. I think the first album is quite psychedelic, so akin to our early stuff, the second album is more what we were trying to do a few years ago, but doing it right this time, maybe a bit more glam rock, a bit more electronic in places. Album 3 is, well, I'm not entirely too sure what it is myself, Britpoppy, I suppose."

How close to finishing them are you? Can we expect a release any time soon?
"The first two should be out mid to late 2026!"

What's happening in the first few months of next year for the band?
"From January, we'll be working on writing and recording some new songs. In February we're at the Lab for the first anniversary A Void Collective show, which we're looking forward to! In March, we're opening for Andrew Cushin. Lots to keep busy with!"

Jordan is one of the most enthusiastic people I've ever met, and his band should be far bigger than they are. Maybe there's something that doesn't resonate with people, maybe that confidence puts some off, I don't know. All I can say is my experience of Jordan over the last year of knowing him is that he's a music lover through and through, a born entertainer, and incredibly driven. So, don't write The Keepers off, they've still got plenty to say that people are going to want to hear, mark my words.

GOSSIP

So, you're here for the dirt on why my previous band split? You've opened this page expecting to find out the secrets of what went on to cause us to suddenly cancel all upcoming gigs and break up? I'm sorry to disappoint, as I'll not be saying.

Gossip is a harmful thing in a scene, causing hurt and resentment when it's not necessary. Why do local music scenes seem to breed it though? I suppose there's a certain rivalry between bands - only so many support slots, so many venues, not everyone can get that great support with a touring band that's going to pack out the Black Prince, and it can seem like those that do are the same faces over and over again. Envy is ugly, but there's always going to be an element of "why are they doing so well, they're fucking shit" in any local scene. Gossip happens, and often gossip that has no basis in fact becomes real if it's repeated enough. It doesn't matter that Davey Bandmember of LokalGroop didn't actually sexually assault anyone, the rumour is already out the door on its way down to the Gari! Who cares that Peter Promoter makes no money at all from gigs, the claim that he's living in a mansion due to stolen profits from putting on Clinging To Delusion and their fellow college band Flaccid Badger at a free gig at the Lab (where both played sets made up of half completed originals and low tempo attempts at Weezer songs while buying nothing from the bar) is holding forth in the rec room at Stalkers with misconceived confidence to anyone who'll listen.

Gossip can't be avoided in local scenes; it's as natural as envy and hurt pride when musicians are involved, but it can be ignored. When you hear it, don't spread it, starve it of oxygen. You have the power to be the person who says "That's enough bollocks".

As I said, I'll never tell what happened, and that's how it should be. (AB)

A Beginner's Guide to the Northampton Music Scenes

Northampton: shoe factories (some closed, a lot still open), lift tower (closed), bus station (demolished), and music scenes that rival much bigger cities. Yes, we did say 'scenes', Northampton is home to several, with a limited amount of overlap between each. Here's a rough, very incomplete, and probably biased attempt to explain them.

Covers Bands

Let's start with the bottom feeders, the worst of the worst. These are the bands filling up community pubs every night of the week, playing all the hits of Foo Fighters, Green Day, The Killers, and Sterephonics (though not always in that order). They are notoriously humourless about any criticism, so instead of naming them here, we'll merely point out that they usually have names like Chunked-Up Cops, Dyna-Might!, Rock Bonanza, or Nuclear Fuse-On. The sickening thing is they're all getting paid to pick the pockets or rob the graves of more successful acts.

The 'Professional' Musicians

These tend to be acts who are in the Billy Lockett orbit, people like Freya Rose, Bootworks, Velvet Engine, Afreine, The Vandervalls and Maddox Jones. Often found playing the Northampton Music Festival stages, these acts are (from the outside) remarkably insular and don't really appear to engage much with the wider scene, unless it's their once-a-year takeover of the other multi-venue multi-date festival. Several musicians from this scene recently played a Beatles event, and the footage of them singing 'Hey Jude' together at the end almost made us cringe ourselves inside out.

The College Bands

Northampton College runs a music course that generates a load of bands every year. Some real gems can emerge from this, but it's important to keep in mind that the bands themselves are often put together as a result of the course, and don't continue to play together after it's finished. They're also (in our experience) rather flaky, can have unrealistic expectations of fee payment from an early stage, as well as being prone to breaking up the day before a gig. Sadly, the interesting ones often vanish, while the dullards hang around for years afterwards. Exercise caution.

The Acoustic Acts

Featuring some of the 'Professional' Musicians as well as artists unique to this group, the

Acoustic Acts can be a mixed bag and are probably the least cliquey of all the scenes. Recent years have seen Russ Heyworth's Hushed project bring a new level of respect to singer-songwriters with acoustic guitars.

The Open Mics
Truly the Outer Darkness of the local scenes, the place where hamfisted 'Live Forever' strummers rub shoulders with those who are deemed too weird or old or inexperienced to play 'proper' gigs. They're part of the reason we started A Void, to give good gigs to the outsiders.

The Hard Rock/Metal Bands
Bands like Garrotte, Bio-Exile, Headswitcher, all making heavier music for audiences who think a mosh pit is WWE crossed with a full-on fist fight. These bands are far less likely to be precious about who they play with, and cheerfully get involved with any gig going, which is a credit to them. Something we could all learn from.

The Blokes
Lame, Fountain, 10-Fall, Rolling Thunder, bands like that. Bands who are mostly blokes playing music for blokes, usually in some kind of sportswear. Remarkably popular with local audiences, so must be doing something right. You'll probably like them if you liked Oasis.

The Noisy Bands
These are the ones you're most likely to find at Picky New or A Void Collective gigs. People making extreme noises with guitars or electronics. Notable members of this group are Utopia Development Corporation, the Dodos, Litesleeper, and JDU. Probably look like judgmental elitist wankers from the outside, but we promise they're not.

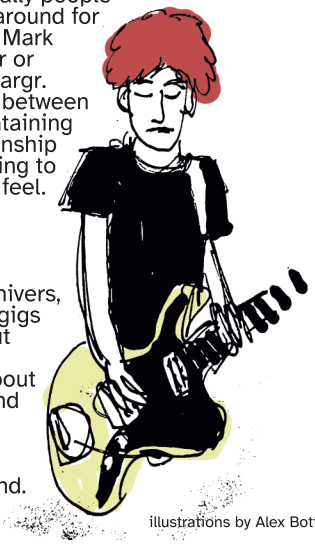
The Veterans
Still going strong after decades of plugging away. This small but exclusive scene includes Alex Novak's Venus Fly Trap, The Aliens, and Marabar Caves. They've stayed the course and remained true to their punk and post-punk roots. Often some of the most supportive people in the town, and any gig that doesn't have Bill and Tony from the Caves dancing down the front is likely to be a bit shit.

Our cover star, Jordan Jones adds:
The Cultural Quarter Musicians don't tend to pass V&B, and go no further than the Fish, whether that's playing or drinking. May possibly play Franklins Gardens on rugby match days. They only pick one pub on St Giles Street to attend an open mic and it's down right traitorous to attend another. Still get ignored for the likes of NMF and are bordering on delusional and slightly cultish

The 'Get All The Support Slots' Gang
You know who they are; just look at local gig posters to see the same 5 or 6 names being given the plum slots at the bigger venues for touring artists over and over again.

The Leavers
A small number of bands flee the town at the first opportunity, some to go to uni, others to go where the success is. Not going to name any of them, because they're traitors to their home town and should be shunned (joking, but not really). Often decide they're too important to interact with their former scene, until the moment they're asked to headline something local and big, at which point they act like Homecoming Heroes and accept all the plaudits from BBC Introducing.

The Outliers
These are the handful of acts that don't really sit in any one group, but have feet in more than one. They're usually people who have been around for a long time, like Mark from Woahgetter or Charles from Chargr. They happily flit between the groups, maintaining a friendly relationship with all. Something to recommend, we feel.



The Blissfully Disinterested
Canyons, Piss Shivers, bands who play gigs and are great but really don't give even one shit about scene politics and thus remain cheerful at all times. Another thing to commend.

illustrations by Alex Botten

REVIEWS

We take a look at new work from Shoetown artists & bands

LIVE

Mum and Dad Talk to Animals
The Lab
14th November 2025

Picture the scene – it is Friday, and you are at the Lab where Blackbird Community is hosting Nature Knows No Kings. The place is filled with teenagers and young adults from a variety of different backgrounds and they all have one thing in common: they want to stand up against fascism. On the stage is Mum & Dad Talk to Animals, delivering their eclectic blend of hardcore and emo. Josh and Michael's guitar work was intricate yet melodic, while their vocal delivery alternated between clean singing and shouting. Coupled with Jamie's thunderous bass tone and Daryl's fast-paced powerful drumming, their performance was emotive and dynamic. It was little wonder that a mosh pit started shortly after Mum & Dad began playing, and by the time their set ended, people were imploring them to play one more song, which sadly did not happen.
When you consider the connection between emo and antifacism, there could not have been a better band to headline Nature Knows No Kings than Mum & Dad Talk to Animals. Their performance was not just a reminder of the growing popularity of emo music in Northampton but also how music can unite people, which is something that is certainly needed in this country right now. (LS)

SINGLES

thistle. "*Tied*" *(Rex)*
thistle. continue their mission to bring the sounds of Swervedriver back to the masses in a short and spikey minute and a half rush that strikes all the right 90's Jericho Tavern chords. The production is spectacularly good, and once they find their own sound, they'll be a force to be reckoned with.

72% "*I'm Not Happy And That's On You Three*"
We really wanted to like this, the first song released from 72%'s forthcoming album of the same name, but there's something that's not quiet grabbing us. It'll probably make more sense in the context for the album, though. Reminds us a bit of Sandy Duncan's Eye, or godheadSilo (incidentally, there's a great live concert of the latter on YouTube, search "godheadSilo @ Rhythm & Brews Indio"). We suspect that it'll sound amazing live, which we'll find out when they play Northampton soon.

Dead Leaves "*Bright Lights on Fire*"
Dead Leaves have decided to reject the "scream over noodly guitar" trend that's swept the UK underground over the last few years. Even when "Bright Lights..." kicks into its noisy chorus they don't slip into the lazy cliché of shouting the vocals. There's an epicness to "Bright Lights..." that suggests Dead Leaves might have their sights set higher than merely opening for The Hangland at the Met Lounge.

King's Division *"Mexico"*
Irredeemably awful indie rock with clumsy lyrics delivered in a mannered vocal style that gives every impression of trying to slavishly copy what more successful bands are doing. You know the particular singing style? The one where the accent comes through in a very mannered way? You've heard it over and over and over again on The Voice or Britain's Got Talent. "Mexico" sounds like the kind of thing Simon Cowell would think was 'fresh' and 'new' but is, in fact, 'stale' and 'old'. Not only that, we were forced to listen to it on the evil Spotify, which lost them even more points. Ghastly.

Cereal Milk *"Blackout"*
Luton's answer to Weird Al deliver a pitch perfect parody of the fucking dreadful nonsense utter roasters like Hard-Fi used to produce. At least we assume it's a parody, as we've not listened to any of their other songs to find out if the rest are such brilliantly observed satire. A band to watch out for.

Utopia Development Corporation *"Repeat"*
If you've seen UDC live at any point in the last couple of years, you've almost certainly heard "Repeat". Slide guitar and Western chords give way to a frantic rush of a song, a proper set opener that sees the band go from a cold start to flinging themselves around the stage in a few short minutes. Finally being released after lingering in limbo for what seems like a couple of years, "Repeat" as a single is a searing statement of intent from a band that's resolutely back after a far too long absence.

Oh Doom! "*Distant Ghosts*"
Is a 9 minute single too long? Oh Doom! don't seem to think so, and they're probably right. "Distant Ghosts" isn't in any hurry, and allows the first 4 minutes to be simple yet effective voice and tremoloed guitar before the whole band bursts into a tremendously effective post-rock roar. The final three minutes see a return to the hushed opening. So, no, 9 minutes is the exact right amount of time when the song is "Distant Ghosts" and the band Oh Doom!

Tom Gage + Vibrio *"Altar" (NLP)*
The new EP from Tom Gage (+ Vibrio, who is also, checks notes, Tom Gage) is a four track trip into a world of chilly ambience that is interupted by sudden bursts of full-on Venetian Snares-style drum and bass. It's less reliant on bombast than Aaron Funk's material, feeling lighter and less self important as a result, but never becomes as playful as Aphex Twin. Fragmented vocal samples drift in and out of 'Flow', whereas 'Numbers' spends its first minute and a half as a wash of ambience before bit-crushed drums skitter into the mix, like Bambi struggling to keep a footing on ice. 'Tides' rounds things out with more Cold War Thriller chilled synth and piano, sitting beneath more busy breakcore beats. Tom Gage + Vibrio would have been right at home on Planet Mu's seminal 2004 "Ammunition" compilation.

ALBUMS

[Pyxis] *"Pont Tombé"*
The new album from Chris Fordham's [Pyxis] project is a hushed trip into the same world that Keiran Hebden's Four Tet occupies. There are also elements of 'IBM 1401, A User's Manual" by Johannes Johansen to be found here, along with Gavin Bryars, Philip Jeck & Alter Ego's masterful "Sinking of the Titanic". "A Duel Between Professor and Poet" introduces fluttering beats which would make Richard James proud, and that wouldn't sound out of place on Warp Records. Elsewhere, malevolent static hovers beneath half-remembered piano melodies, while synths bubble, distorted modem dial-up sounds prowl the edge ot the stereo field, and incidental noises become beats, while beats become incidental noises.
Around 2006, I was listening to this kind of thing almost exclusively, and it's lovely to be pulled back into that world. Once this has finished, I'm off to listen to some Leafcutter John, Lucky Dragons, Adem, and Aphex Twin.

Skybeard *"Who Told You You Were Naked"*
You wait years for a live Skybeard show and album, then they suddenly pop up with both in the space of a few weeks. The latter is the least surprising, as they mentioned it from the stage at their recent live return. Anyway, "Who Told You Were Naked" continues in the vein of their first two releases, carefully structured instrumental rock music, liberally sprinkled with samples from films and TV. The Mogwai-esque tongue-in-cheek titles remain ('Bing Crimson' especially being one that Stuart Braithwaite would be proud of).
Some songs are oddly fragmentary, with more than one containing what feels like parts of several in a way that recalls Big Country's excellent soundtrack to 'Restless Natives' (a whole album they hid on the b-sides of two 12" singles).
Suitably epic throughout, on the strength of their third album, Skybeard could give AV Sunset a run for their money in the local instrumental post-rock sweepstakes. Here's hoping we don't have to wait another 4 years for the next album or gig.
.

LIVE

photo Alex Botten

Moon Haze
The Lab
27th of November 2025

We've said it before, Moon Haze have improved immeasurably since their early, rather tentative, almost-goth beginnings. Tonight, they presented as a supremely confident quartet, running through a set of thunderously tuneful almost-metal.
A lot of bands have improbable dreams of massive success, saying in interviews that they want to tour the world or headline Download. Most of the time, these are nothing but delusional fantasies inspired by seeing the success of acts that made it before the music industry became so irretrievably broken that no one but the already wealthy has a chance. Moon Haze have echoed these wishes in interview, but we have a gut feeling that, with the right opportunities, they could pull it off. They look right, and their songs are tuneful earworms that prove the harder end of rock doesn't need to be about sweaty tatted blokes screaming. In fact, when the bassist and guitarist add backing vocals to lead singer Heather's, something peculiar happens and they sound like far more than just three people singing; there's some intuitive and very clever harmonising going on that is almost wizardry.
Moon Haze are brilliant at what they do and have amazing haircuts; here's hoping the right people notice. (AB)

Wrangler & Citizen Above Suspicion, The Lab, 29/11/2025

Photos by Alex Botten

What is the purpose of music journalism? Is it to build up, regardless of whether or not the music is good? Is it to write carefully crafted, barbed to the point of cruelty, takedowns of kids just starting out? Is it to present a balanced view of what the writer has experienced? Or is it simply a vehicle for the writer to show off how much “cooler” they are than anyone else? Keith Cameron once wrote, “Radiohead are a pitiful, lily-livered excuse for a rock 'n' roll group”, and that didn’t do them any harm.

Is it a combination of all four?

It becomes even harder when writing in a tiny local publication about tiny local bands. While Radiohead probably felt bad for about 10 seconds and then continued with their unstoppable rise to global superstardom, Plumber’s Elbow from Corby might be mortally wounded and simply quit, thus robbing the world of the chance to hear a middlingly competent debut album that could end up being the favourite record ever for 3 people.

So, how to write about Wrangler? This writer didn’t like them at all, but that’s simply a personal opinion. The friends and family packed into the Lab to see them cheered every note, every “Are you feeling ALLLRIIIGGGHTT!??” from the singer. They applauded as the members were introduced in turn during the set closing cover of “Live Forever” (bravely performed with the addition of a couple of chords that weren’t in the original). Given time Wrangler may end up becoming the next Radiohead, or may fade away, guitars hung on walls as conversation pieces when work colleagues come over for dinner, “Oh that? Yeah, I used to be in a band”.

Definitely not fading away are Citizen Above Suspicion, up from London for their first show in Northampton. The half-hour barrage of sheer volume drove most of Wrangler’s audience outside, while a remaining handful of us braved the onslaught. You know that thing at small gigs where the drums drown out the rest of the band? Tonight, the rest of the band drowned out the drums. Plugging into the same level of chaos that A Place To Bury Strangers have mastered, Citizen Above Suspicion are more focused live than APTBS manage. Where Oliver Ackerman uses effects and volume to simply make the whole band go ***KSHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE*** at deafening volume for a whole set, Citizen frontman Baptiste allows song structure and texture to cut through the noise. Those of us who stayed were left smiling and deafened. Here’s to hoping they return soon. (AB)

REWIND

We look back at some notable Northampton releases from the past

Marabar Caves *in the 1980s*

We're all familiar with the Marabar Caves, the good-time party band who regularly bring straight-up Rock and Roll to gigs across the area, but they have a history that reaches back into the late 70s. By the mid-80s, they were releasing records on their own Tiki Records label. These songs are undeniably Marabar Caves, but removed enough in time to be their own thing and worthy of revisiting.

The 1987 EP, 'Eyes of Fire', starts strongly with 'Watching The Wheels Go Round', which can only be described as a funky, almost-'Suicide Blonde' blast that pre-dates the INXS number by several years. We can only imagine how the Caves must have felt when their Australian counterparts scored a massive hit with what is essentially the same song. 'Police State' is a shorter, more forgettable number, but side two's 'Limbo Walkers' is a real gem, a slower, more reflective track that had us singing along before the first chorus was done. 'Eyes of Fire' rounds the set out with what can only be described as postpunk in the mould of early U2. It's got more space to breathe than the other tracks, and we imagine it would sound great played loud and live at The Lab - it's probably the strongest song on the EP, even though it doesn't have the funk of 'Watching...' or the melodic strength of 'Limbo Walkers'

Stepping back to 1984, there's the 7" 'Sally's Place' b/w 'Seeds That Never Grew' which presents a sound that's half rooted in classic rock and roll and that magical early 80's indie sound that was everywhere back then (you know the type, jangly guitars, the energy of punk but with better songwriting). The b-side continues the classic 80's indie theme, but with some hint at what the band would do on 'Eyes of Fire', and is of a piece with the EP's title track.

To complete the set, there's the Bandcamp release 'Unforbidden Lands', a three-track collection of 1985 demos. Sitting in time between the 'Sally's Place' 7" and 'Eyes of Fire' EP, you can clearly hear the band moving from the scratchy indie of the former towards the confident strut of the latter. It's a shame these three didn't make it to vinyl, as they're every bit as good as the songs that were released at the time.

It would be great to hear modern-era Marabar Caves reach back into their back catalogue and bring some of these classics out for another run. (AB & CBS)

Seach Bandcamp for the demos, and eBay/Discogs for the vinyl

Bauhaus *The Sky's Gone Out*

Bauhaus's third album was released in October 1982, following on from *Mask* and *In The Flat Field*. I first experienced it as a double cassette, with the live album *Press The Eject And Give Me The Tape* on the other side. It has been enjoyable to revisit it.

Unlike the previous two albums, there was tension between the band and the producer/engineer they had brought in, and the band and their record label, Beggars Banquet. This is apparent in that the album sounds less cohesive than its predecessors; it hangs together less well, but this is also down to the fact that the band did not have solid ideas/material ready for recording when they went into the studio ~ they winged a lot of it. Despite this, it is a strong album. I personally like the tension in it; it has an edginess and chaos that gives it a dark energy.

What stands out for me is the variation in musical styles ~ this is not just a Goth rock album. There is *Spirit*, which was a single, but an extended version here. A euphoric anthemic romp, about their on-stage muse. *All We Ever Wanted Was Everything* is a beautiful ballad, full of pathos and regret and longing, hinting at the nostalgia of childhood. *Swing The Heartache* is bludgeoning & industrial, with grinding, clanking guitar breaks, that give way to delicate, tinkling notes at the end. Such experimentation and inventiveness is a trademark of this album. *The Three Shadows, Part I, II & III* begins with a spooky, haunting instrumental and builds into a dramatic rant, redolent of Kurt Weil, with absurd, crass, hammy lyric. The final track, *Exquisite Corpse*, is the most avant-garde of all. The title refers to a technique invented by the Surrealist artists. In this track, it appears that each band member came up with a chunk of music, that were then all stitched together. There are dispirit styles and techniques here; spoken word, Dub reggae, snoring, backward recording. The darkness and chaos of the whole album are captured in the desperate shriek of "the sky's gone out". Some kind of compelling spirit of apocalypse is reveled in here (MD).

LIVE

The Brothers Gillespie
The Lab
22nd November 2025

Has anyone else noticed a strange variation in how we consume live music in Northampton? It's all about afternoon matinees.
Driven by Andy Shaw's mindbogglingly strong weekend shows at the Garibaldi, Sheila Cox's Folkish events at The Lab may have slipped under your radar, but she has been scouring the nation's folk festivals to find performers for our Saturday afternoon pleasure.
Hexham duo, The Brothers Gillespie have been hunted down and booked after 2 years of stalking and well worth the wait. James and Sam Gillespie are assured and thorough. Festival stalwarts, on their third studio album and it sounds like it.
Standing around one mic, they preach about their local landscape, seasons and the natural world. Sibling connected harmonies twist the breathy sound. It helps that Sam is a finger picking maestro, as songs float past with ease and depth and create a far-off world, where music is as natural as the streams running through the valleys of Northumberland. You have to keep reminding yourself that this is just two voices and an acoustic guitar and sometimes (fretless!) banjo.
Folk is considered by many as outdated, irrelevant and dull music for people who could be described in much the same way. Be proved totally wrong by Folkish matinees. What I witnessed here was song writing as a craft, musicianship without the pout, performance from the soul, in a world of plastic repetition. Artistry. (RH)

Uppity Poetry: (A Night Out)

Russell Heyworth

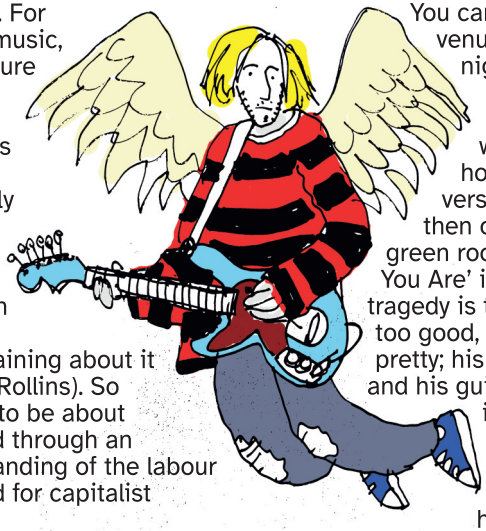
Heads up
Round up
Hurry up
Dressed up
Hyped up
Turn up
Knees up
Stand up
Crack up
Slap up
Rave up
Toss up
Pick me up
Bottoms up
Boozed up
Pin up
Hook up
Top up
Balls up
Flare up
Puffed up
Close up
Snarl up
Pumped up
Bust up
Dust up
Punch up
Back up
Pick up
Clean up
Patch up
Chin up
Make up
Well brought up

Kurt Cobain Is Stuck in Samsara (and it's all your fault!)

A. Forest MSc. Doktorand of his Royal Highness Carl XVI Gustav writes.

Illustration by Alex Botten

In *Capitalist Realism*, the late Mark Fisher points out a fundamental contradiction to punk. With his "objectless rage and dreadful lassitude" Cobain exemplified this perfectly. Fisher's thesis is that with neoliberalism, we have lost our vision of the future, and are thus haunted by past imaginaries of what is to come. Punk's haunt-ology is that it endlessly wants to "keep it real" while also desperately wanting to sell out. For Cobain and Punk music, success meant failure and failure meant success.



Essentially, Punk as ideology must be independent, poorly remunerated, and ultimately lead to sleeping on a stained mattress in a cold van and incessantly complaining about it years later (Henry Rollins). So Punk is supposed to be about authenticity, coded through an immature understanding of the labour alienation required for capitalist accumulation.

Fisher compared punk unfavourably to hip hop, which, in his view, simply out-punked punk by embracing the industry. Hip hop said: Yes, I am going to make money, that's the point, isn't it? There's something gloriously honest about that. Meanwhile, punk is still in the corner muttering to itself about 'selling out.'

Enter Kurt Cobain, punk's last hurrah- guitars and shirts held together by duct tape, yet selling 30 million records and being driven around in a limousine, the epitome of punk's great contradiction. Nirvana, the name, comes from a Hindu concept meaning liberation from the cycle of rebirth, a peaceful escape from suffering, the end of all earthly cravings. Ironically, however, Kurt's spirit will never reach Nirvana; rather, he's been trapped in the grimmest version of reincarnation imaginable. Everything that follows Nirvana is a poorer version of what has already been, what Fisher calls Pastiche-rock. Cobain endures Samsara, an endless rebirth into worse and worse versions of his own band. Imagine an outrageously expensive Dr Martens boot stamping onto a Boss DS-1 in the shape of Kurt's face, forever.

You can hear it in every small venue in Britain on a Friday night. Some teenager with a pedalboard the size of a tactical aircraft carrier will plug in and play a horrendous ripped off version of '....Teen Spirit', then obnoxiously insist in the green room later that 'Come As You Are' is a 'deep cut.' Cobain's tragedy is that his voice was just too good, he was just a bit too pretty; his songs a bit too good, and his guitar playing just a bit too idiosyncratic for any cretin with a guitar to steal. Say what you will about Eddie Van Halen, his music was unutterably awful and he was an odious human being, but you don't hear endless rip-offs of Eruption at least. And now here we are: a thousand knock-off Nirvanas later, each one just slightly worse than the last. A spiritual and sonic descent through the seven circles of post-grunge hell.

In recent days, another black-hole Nirvana tribute act objectively imploded the scene of Northampton- sucking in a two-piece guitar-and-bass combo with a name that was meant as a misguided tribute to Mötley Crüe. Just another casualty in the great cyclonic Cobain reincarnation.

Cobain's spirit lingers, however, with new formations of Nirvana erupting all over the world as you read this. Will he ever be at peace?

NEW RELEASES FROM HAULAGE DISTRIBUTION

build up your collection with these highest price lowest quality releases!

Emu Emasculation Association "Squirty Bum William"

The latest release from Kingthorpe's finest mixes the lyrical flash of Brown (Chubby) with the musical prowess of Zappa (Frank)
7" and mini CD

The Labatts "Hats Entertainment"

If you like your Libertines like you like your Canadian beer - piss weak and second rate - try the Labatts! 12 tales of debauchery. Includes the Top 50 Nlive Chart hit "Only When I Laugh (with Steve Bedlow)"
LP, Cassette, CD, Download

The Keepers "Judas Jones"

On "Judas Jones", The Keepers finally explore the only area their desperate search for success has left untouched; electro-rock. Critics are calling the results 'mixed' and 'maybe not what we need'
CD and download

The Vybe "Where's the Drugs?"

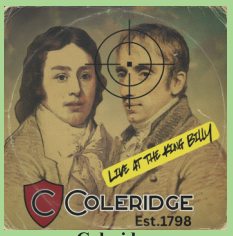
Described by When it Shits magazine as "a perplexing fusion of Flowered Up and The Butthole Surfers", honorary Mancunians, The Vybe take you on a drug fueled trip back to the 90s. Featuring the hit singles "Drugs Carousel" and "Spliff Broomstick"
LP, Cassette & CD

Spigot "Straight Geezer"

Spigot's two man moustache assault on your ears is an unforgettable experience. Known as the best sports in town, their new single "Straight Geezer" is worth 50% more than any other song by any other garage rock powerhouse
Download only

In U2ero "Peroxide"

Steadfastly refusing to be influenced by other bands, In U2ero are 100% original! Front man Kris Grohl's primal howl meshes with guitarist The Fringe's echo driven sounds across this 4 song EP. Includes 'Scent of Teen Rebellion', 'Failed Search', 'Give Yourself Away', and 'Location Urination'. Pressed on white wax
7" and cassette



Coleridge "Live at the King Billy"

If you've been to the Billy, The Squirrels, the Wig and Pen, or Upton Conservative Club in the last year you're bound to have encountered the raw energy of 'interpretation' band, Coleridge. This is their debut, featuring "Dakota", "Mr Brightside", "Dancing Queen" and more!
CD and USB stick

;ockle "Kaleidoscope"

Shoetown's own Sons of Ford Focus, ;cockle, Ride out of the gate with their unique brand of the sound of the Jericho Tavern in Oxford, circa 1992! Adam Franklin's mum would take them home by mistake, and so will you!
7" and Cassette

ÜLV "20 Party Favourites"

Is it still ÜLV? Following a line-up change which has seen both original members leave, ÜLV roar back into the limelight with a selection of covers sure to get the Billy Bopping! Includes "Mr Brightside" and "Dakota"
LP and Cassette

Byronnic Commandos "Shelley's Heroes"

From Northampton via Sweden, the new album by Gothic Lit/Rock pioneers Byronnic Commandos. If you like songs about Dracula's domestic arrangements, ancient curses and that time Edgar Linton gave Heathcliff a slap, this is for you!
LP, Cassette, Wax Cylinder and Download

COMING SOON...

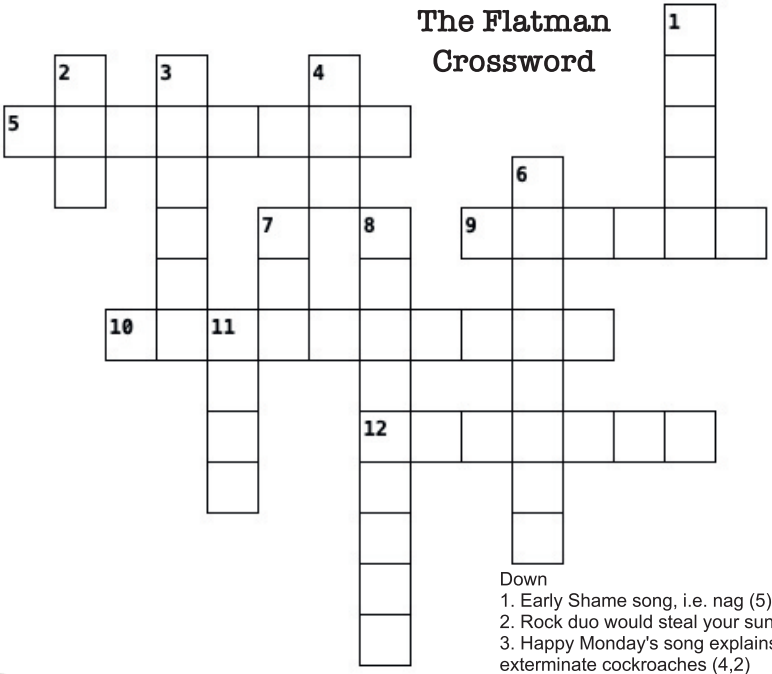
The Shoefits "On Mulberry Hump"
Bill the Piano Man "Comfy Hits"
Glandular Dung "Heavy Petting"
The Teyn "Albion on Weedon"
Wire Noose "Let the Bad Times Roll"
Terminal Nun "The Return of Terminal Nun"
Thee Gadfly "Smooth Talking Johnny"
Sporks "Generation Why?"
General Disturbance "Radio GD"

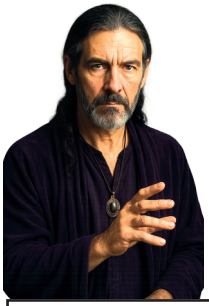
Haulage Distribution Ltd.
Centrifuge House,
Comsat Way
Northampton
NN0 2UU

HAULAGE DISTRIBUTION

Bollocks at the Back

The Flatman Crossword





Across
5. Serpentine Strokes hit (8)
9. Nonsense Verve 'poem' that absolutely isn't what is says it is (6)
10. Early accidental Muse single (10)
12. Decent Supergrass single (7)

Down
1. Early Shame song, i.e. nag (5)
2. Rock duo would steal your sunshine (3)
3. Happy Monday's song explains how to exterminate cockroaches (4,2)
4. French duo who sang 'Sexy Boy' (3)
6. Catfish and the Bottlemen single yearns for the familiar (8)
7. Experimental Krautrock band, songs include Spoon and Vitamin C (3)
8. Band who were somewhat questionably turning Japanese (3,6)
11. Worship the surname of the single who dances with himself (4)

A Void Disaster with our Monthly Horoscopes by Terry Kinesis

Aries (March 21- Apr 20) It's been a tough year, I can't pretend otherwise. What with all the things that have happened to me I wonder if there's any point in going on, or if I should embrace the final darkness.

Taurus (Apr 21- May 21) Because really what's the point? I've done everything I can for that woman, for those kids, and all I've got in return is having to rent a poxy little flat in Rushden and microwave dinners every night.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21) It's not fun, it's not funny. How was I to know Jenny would have a friend in the Wig & Pen on the night I met up with Luna Mooncloud?

Cancer (June 22 – July 22) I mean, seriously, what are the chances of that? Pretty slim, I'd imagine? Yeah? But there she was, sneakily taking photos as Luna and I became a little too intimate in a place that, in hindsight, was rather too public.

Leo (July 23 – Aug 22) I suppose I might be partially to blame, but I have needs too, Jenny! I have needs! You certainly had 'needs' when you had your *thing* with your trainer at the gym! What was his name again? Dion or something equally facile?

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22) Yeah, it was fine for you to get intimate with fucking Dion, wasn't it? Where was the Terry-love then? And how did even that become somehow my fault?? I'd love to know the answer to that mystery!

Libra (Sept 23 – Oct 22) But no, it's all ok for Saint Jenny to be getting some from her trainer, but if old Terry wants to feel something, if old Terry needs some warmth in his heart and joy in his soul, it's all "You're a cheating piece of shit, Terrance!" and thrown plates!

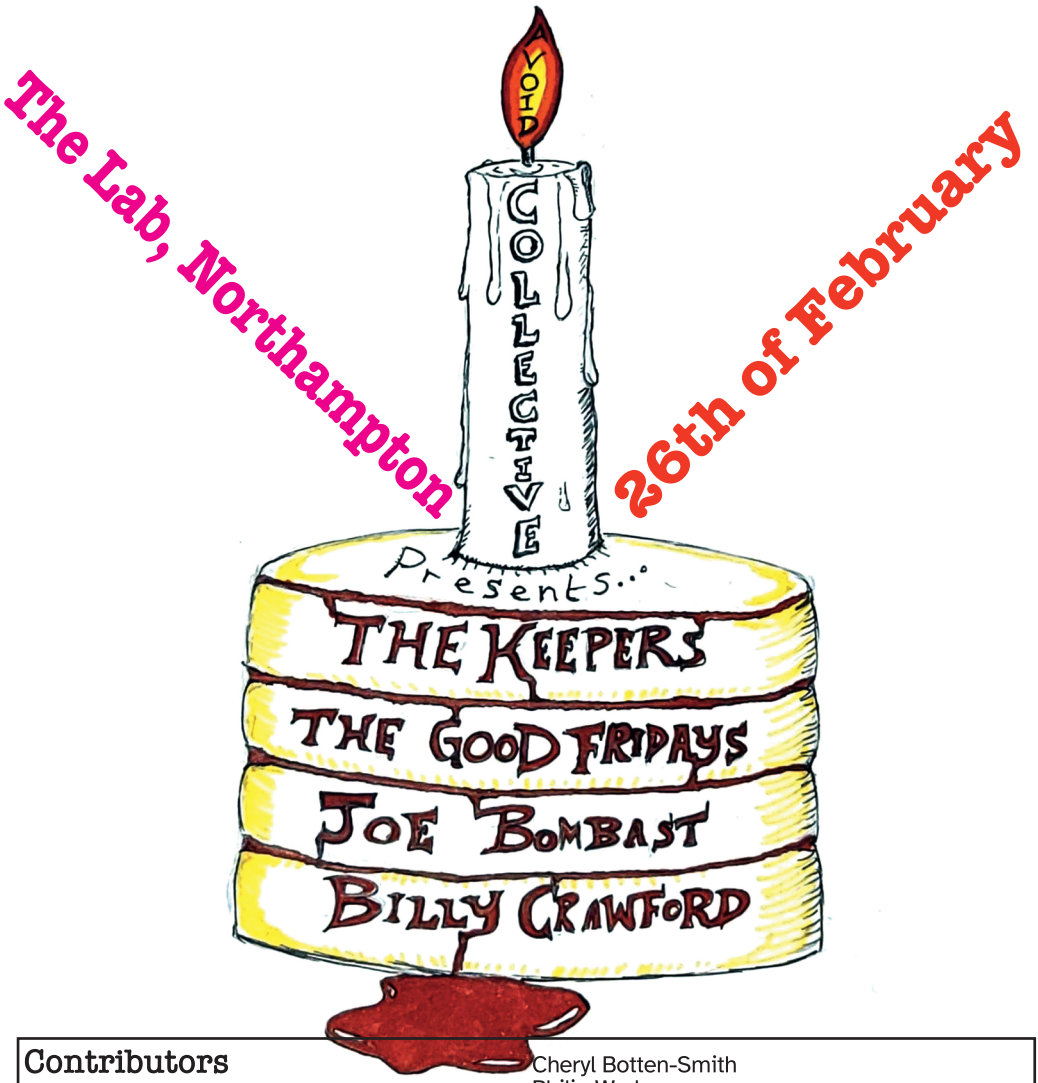
Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21) Note, I didn't make YOU move out when you were porking that lycra clad prick, did it, Jenny? No! I forgave you when you came to me in tears after he went back to his wife and children and cancelled your membership to PureGym!

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21) But when the cock was on the other foot, muggins here rapidly found himself in the Sixfields Travelodge, head spinning and heart racing! Is that fair? Is it? No, I don't think it is!

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 20) Christmas came fucking late for me, if it came at all! I was in Rushden on Christmas day, wishing I was dead, and where you, Jenny? Oh, that's right, in my big house in front of the open fire in the second lounge!

Aquarius (Jan 21 – Feb 19) What's the point, why am I even bothering with this? No-one cares, no-one will probably even read this.

Pisces (Feb 20 – March 20) I guess I'll just have to see how many of my so-called friends try to help me. If it's none, if not a single one of them sees my pain, I'll just go back to predicting the monthly fortunes like nothing fucking happened.



Contributors

Editor: Alex Botten
Deputy Editor: Andrew Slack
Writers/Contributers:
Maevis Darkhorse
Daniele Marzeddu
Louis Sefton
Kieran Stowell
Simon Flatman
Cheryl Botten-Smith
Philip Wade
Nix Nene
Terry Kinesis
Russell Heyworth
Aimee Woollon-Kemp

Finances: Cheryl Smith & Alex Botten
Printed by Tradeprint.co.uk

Want to play one of our shows or write for us? Drop us a line at https://linktr.ee/avoidcollective

Next Issue: who knows! We're writing this in December so haven't got a clue what'll be in issue 7! Just assume it'll great and everyone will be happy.